Fall Webworm
Hyphantria cunea

Symptoms & Damage
- Silken webs ("tents") envelop branch ends, often 2–3 ft across.
- Inside tents are skeletonized leaves, frass, and cast skins.
- Multiple specimens feed together; movement in unison when disturbed.

Cause
- Larvae hatch from egg masses (hundreds) on leaf undersides in mid-summer.
- Caterpillars spin communal silk webs as they feed.
- One generation in the north; up to two+ in areas like Missouri.

Prevention & Cultural Controls
- Monitor trees late summer; prune out small nests early.
- Remove winter egg masses in winter inspection.
- Encourage natural predators: >50 parasitoids and predators control populations.

Treatment Options
- **Organic Solutions**
  - Hand-remove webs (use pole pruner or gloves).
  - Apply Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) when larvae are active.

- **Chemical Treatments**
  - Targeted sprays with Bt, spinosad, or pyrethrin — follow product label.

- **Best Time to Treat**
  - Apply treatments when larvae are small and active—mid to late summer

Plant(s) Affected
- Feeds on 100+ deciduous species. Prefers: mulberry, walnut, hickory, elm, sweetgum, poplar, willow, oak, linden, ash, apple.

Additional Notes
- Damage is almost entirely aesthetic; healthy trees typically recover without lasting harm.
- Larvae do not feed on next year's buds.
- Avoid drastic measures (e.g., burning branches); these often cause more damage than the caterpillars.

BAXTER GARDENS
CHESTERFIELD